

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /072 W
-----190138Z 074696 /64

R 181715Z MAY 77
FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1685
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMCONSUL OPORTO
COMUSFORAZ
USCINCEUR
CINCLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 0178

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PO
SUBJ: FLAG INCIDENT: MOTA AMARAL'S VIEW'S

REF: A. PONTA DELGADA 150 (DTG 221655Z APR 77) (NOTAL)
B. PONTA DELGADA 171 (DTG 161435Z MAY 77)
C. PONTA DELGADA 172 (DTG 162200Z MAY 77)

1. AZOREAN FLAGS ORDERED REMOVED: ON MAY 17 REGIONAL GOVERNMENT
PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL RELATED TO ME THE DETAILS OF THE EVENTS
OF MAY 14 TO 16. PRESIDENT EANES ON MAY 14 ORDERED THE REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT TO REMOVE THE AZOREAN FLAGS IN THE PONTA DELGADA
SQUARE. THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTED THE PONTA DELGADA
CITY COUNCIL, WHICH HAD DECIDED NOT TO REMOVE THE AZOREAN
FLAGS. EANES THEN SAID HE WOULD DISMISS THE CITY COUNCIL, BUT
MOTA AMARAL TOLD HIM THAT NEITHER HE, THE PRESIDENT, NOR THE
REGIONAL GOVERNMENT COULD DISMISS THE DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED
COUNCIL. EANES GAVE THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT UNTIL MIDNIGHT TO
REMOVE THE AZOREAN FLAGS. MOTA AMARAL AGAIN CONSULTED THE
REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WHICH DECIDED NOT TO REMOVE THE AZOREAN
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FLAGS DURING THE HOLIDAY BUT MOTA AMARAL SAID THE FLAGS WOULD
BE REMOVED 48 HOURS LATER. EANES RESPONDED BY THREATENING
TO DISMISS THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT. MOTA AMARAL REMINDED THE
PRESIDENT THAT REGIONAL GOVERNMENT DEPENDS ON THE REGIONAL
ASSEMBLY AND NOT ON THE PRESIDENT AND THAT IF THE REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT WON A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE ASSEMBLY (A FORGONE
CONCLUSION IN VIEW OF THE LARGE MAJORITY PSD) THE PRESIDENT

WOULD HAVE TO DISMISS THE ASSEMBLY ALSO. THAT IN TURN WOULD LEAD TO THE RESIGNATION OF ALL THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS AND START A PROCESS THAT WOULD LEAD TO THE END. EANES THEN GAVE UP THE IDEA OF DISMISSING ANY AZOREAN GOVERNMENT BODY. MOTA AMARAL RELATED THAT HE WARNED BOTH EANES AND MARIO SOARES ON MAY 14 THAT THE REMOVAL OF THE AZOREAN FLAGS BY THE MILITARY WOULD PROVOKE VIOLENCE AND POSSIBLY DEATHS, AND THAT SUCH ACTION WAS SEPARATIST ON THE PART OF LISBON.

2. MAY 15 VIOLENCE: MOTA AMARAL STATED THAT WHEN THE AZOREAN FLAG WAS RAISED ON THE NIGHT OF MAY 15, THE POLICE, WHICH HAD BEEN SENT FROM TERCEIRA, BEGAN BEATING SOME PEOPLE. THIS INFURIATED THE CROWD AND LED IT TO TURN ON THE POLICE HEAD-QUARTERS. AFTER THE POLICE HAD ARRESTED THE MAN ACCUSED OF THE SHOOTINGS (REF B) AND USED TEAR GAS IN AN ATTEMPT TO DISPURSE THE CROWD, A LARGE GROUP STILL REMAINED THREATENING THE POLICE STATION. AT THAT POINT FLA LEADER, JOSE ALMEIDA, STEPPED FORWARD AND OFFERED TO REMOVE THE AZOREAN FLAG AND SEND THE CROWD HOME IN EXCHANGE FOR THE PRISONER. THE POLICE AGREED AND RELEASED THE ACCUSED MAN TO JOSE ALMEIDA. THE FLA LEADER THEN WENT AND REMOVED THE AZOREAN FLAG AND TOOK IT HOME. MOTA AMARAL NOTED THAT THE INCIDENT STRENGTHENED CONSIDERABLY JOSE ALMEIDA AND FLA.

3. MOTA AMARAL BELIEVES A FACTION OF THE PS MAY HAVE BEEN BEHIND LISBON'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE AZOREAN FLAG. HE BELIEVES THE SOCIALISTS HAVE A COMPLEX ABOUT SEPARATISM AS A RESULT OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF PORTUGAL'S FORMER AFRICAN TERRITORIES. EANES, IN HIS VIEW, ALSO HAS A COMPLEX
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ABOUT SEPARATISM. FOR THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO SPEND ITS TIME WORKING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION THAN WORRY ABOUT THE SEPARATISTS WHO ARE A MINORITY. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, A GOOD NUMBER OF AZOREANS, WHO WHILE NOT SEPARATISTS, RETAIN A CERTAIN SYMPATHY FOR THE IDEA OF INDEPENDENCE AND THEY ARE FOUND AMONG THE SUPPORTERS OF THE PSD. ACTIONS OF LISBON, SUCH AS USING FORCE TO REMOVE THE AZOREAN FLAG, PUSH THEM CLOSER TO THE SEPARATISTS. MOTA AMARAL EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT MISGUIDED POLICIES FROM LISBON COULD DRIVE THE AZORES TO INDEPENDENCE AGAINST THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY OF THE AZOREANS.

4. LAJES BASE NEGOTIATIONS: MOTA AMARAL CITED THE LAJES BASE NEGOTIATIONS AS AN EXAMPLE OF GOP POLICIES WHICH ENCOURAGE SEPARATISM. HE BELIEVES THE GOP IS DELIBERATELY DELAYING THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL PORTUGAL WILL HAVE OBTAINED SO MUCH FROM THE USG THAT IT WILL BE IN NO POSITION TO ASK FOR ANYTHING IN THE LAJES NEGOTIATIONS AND THUS THE AZORES WILL RECEIVE LITTLE. BUT, AZOREANS REMEMBER EACH INCIDENT WHEN LISBON HAS MISTREATED

THEM AND EVENTUALLY WILL LOSE HOPE THAT THERE IS ANY VALUE IN
TIES TO LISBON.

5. HIS U.S. TRIP: MOTA AMARAL SAID HIS RECENT TRIP TO THE US
WAS SUCCESSFUL INSPITE OF THE PORTUGUESE EMBASSY'S ATTEMPT TO
SABOTAGE IT. NOT ONLY DID THE PORTUGUESE EMBASSY REFUSE TO
MAKE ANY ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIM, BUT A PORTUGUESE CONSUL IN THE
BOSTON AREA TRIED TO GET THE SOUTHERN MASSACHUSETTS UNIVERSITY
TO WITHDRAW ITS INVITATION TO HIM. THROUGH PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS
HE SAW IN WASHINGTON SENATORS PELL AND BROOKE AND REPRESENTATIVES
HECKLER AND STUDDS. IN ORDER NOT TO ADD FUEL TO THE FIRES, HE
HAD NOT PUBLICISED THE PORTUGUESE EMBASSY'S TREATMENT OF HIM.

7. COMMENT: WITHIN THE AZOREAN CONTEXT, MOTA AMARAL IS A MODERATE.
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